

TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL GRADUATE
OF NEW YORK'S 12TH CONGRES-
SIONAL DISTRICT WITH PER-
FECT ATTENDANCE

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 1997

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the achievement of a very special graduate of the 12th Congressional District who has had perfect attendance for 6 years; since enrolling in kindergarten at Edward Bush Public School 18 in Brooklyn, NY. This graduate has been undaunted by obstacles and has demonstrated a true commitment to her educational goals.

She has learned that education is priceless and that she will be provided with the tools and opportunities to be successful in any endeavor she pursues by dedicating herself to her studies. Her success is a tribute not only to her strength and discipline but also to the supportive parents and teachers who have encouraged her. I am confident that the combination of these forces will lead her to many more achievements.

Mr. Speaker, as congressional Representatives we often discuss solutions to the plight of our Nation's educational system. We diligently strive to encourage educational excellence and dedication to higher learning. This student's unique achievement can serve as an example to others and I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House Representatives to join me in congratulating her. May her future be filled with many more successes. Congratulations to Kimberly Rodriguez.

A TRIBUTE TO JAMES D. ERICSON

HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 1997

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute today to one of Milwaukee's truly outstanding citizens, Mr. James D. Ericson. As the Wisconsin Chapter of the State of Israel Bonds gathers this evening to present Mr. Ericson with its 1997 LaSociete Award, I would like to take a moment to reflect on his remarkable contributions to the State of Israel Bonds, the city of Milwaukee, and the State of Wisconsin.

As the president and CEO of Northwestern Mutual Life since 1990, Jim Ericson has skillfully led one of the Nation's largest and most respected insurance companies to unprecedented levels of success. Named the "Most Admired Company" among insurance executives in a recent Fortune magazine survey, Northwestern Mutual has been a responsible and innovative corporate citizen, thanks in no small part to Jim Ericson's hands-on leadership and management capabilities. During the past 5 years, Northwestern Mutual has contributed more than \$20 million to an array of educational, health, community, and civic endeavors. And as the president of Northwestern Mutual, Jim Ericson has always encouraged the company's 3,500 employees to volunteer their time and energy to make a real difference in our community. To honor the efforts

of his employees, Jim Ericson established the Agent Community Service awards to recognize specific agents for volunteer commitment to their local communities.

Jim Ericson is known throughout Milwaukee and all of Wisconsin for his impressive civic accomplishments. From his initial organization of the Milwaukee Redevelopment Commission, to his successful work to bring professional baseball back to Milwaukee, Jim Ericson has always been at the forefront of all matters important to the economic progress of our city. In addition to his undeniable commitment to the State of Israel Bonds, Jim Ericson has served on more than a dozen boards and advisory panels. Most notably, he is a director of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, and serves on the boards of the United Way of Milwaukee, Wisconsin Literacy Services, and the Blood Center of Milwaukee, just to name a few. In 1996, Jim Ericson received the prestigious St. Francis Children's Center Community Service Award for his leadership and personal commitment to our community.

The State of Israel Bonds plays a vital role in Wisconsin by creating a public awareness about the importance of maintaining a strong state of Israel. The organization also raises critical capital through Israel bonds which will ensure the long-term economic security and viability of the country. Jim Ericson has always recognized the importance of Israel bonds, and is well deserving of the organization's appreciation.

I would like to congratulate Jim Ericson's wife Patricia, their four children, and four grandchildren on this most special occasion. Thank you Jim Ericson, for all of your hard work and dedication. Your selfless efforts and persistence epitomizes Milwaukee's spirit of giving and sense of community.

REV. DR. EDWARD D. SMART, JR.—
A MAN OF PRINCIPLE AND
COURAGE

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 1997

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an event that was held this past Saturday. It was a reception held for Rev. Dr. Edward D. Smart, Jr. Rev. Dr. Smart is the shepherd of the Israel Memorial AME Church in Newark, NJ.

Rev. Dr. Smart is the epitome of leadership. He is courageous and committed to serving the members of our community, especially our young people. Serving by example is his method. He attended Fisk University where he was a Fisk Jubilee singer. He is a graduate of Penn State University with a degree in political science. He did graduate work at Shippensburg University and received his ministerial preparation at Gettysburg Theological Seminary. He holds a doctorate from the University of California. He is a member of the Essex County Welfare to Workfare Task Force. He is the co-chairperson of the Newark Fighting Back Partnership, a program to reduce the demand for illicit drugs and alcohol. He has been involved since its inception. He has been integrally involved with the development of the Interfaith

Clergy Community Alliance which is an effort to increase the aftercare for people in recovery by the faith community.

Israel Memorial AME Church has continued to grow under the stewardship of Reverend Smart. It has grown both financially and spiritually since his arrival in May 1991. He has faithfully worked to carry out its mission, "Israel Memorial AME Church strives to maintain a standard of Christian living within the metropolitan Newark area through evangelism, proclamation of the Word, stewardship, worship, bible study, and prayer meeting." He has been innovative in his approach to making life better for everyone he serves, which is the entire community. He is not one to take the safe way out always. He is a thoughtful risktaker when he feels he is justified in his position on certain issues. Because of this, he has garnered the respect and support of many.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues would have joined me as I congratulated Reverend Smart on his dedication to his faith, our community, and our young people.

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 1997

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend three schools in my California district which the Department of Education recognized as Blue Ribbon schools. All three schools share as their mission an integrated approach to working with the community and with parents to educate and assist children in realizing their full potential as responsible, productive, contributing members of society.

The Philip J. Reilly School in Mission Viejo stands as an example of excellence in the community. The school provides a consolidated facility allowing disabled and non-disabled students to learn side by side and from each other. Architects received awards for designing the school to be entirely physically accessible to all students.

School success rests squarely on both the efforts of teachers and parents. At Barcelona Hills Elementary School, volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours of service just last year alone. Community efforts allowed the school to upgrade and integrate technology into every area of the curriculum. In addition to building students' academic prowess, teachers place emphasis on promoting integrity, responsibility, good citizenship, and perseverance.

Similarly, Laguna Niguel's George L. White Elementary School sets high academic and behavioral standards. White Elementary earned three commendations during its first program quality review. Further, the school-teacher teaches children to give back to the community, sponsoring the kids in community service program. Projects include beach cleanups, corresponding with nursing home residents, and collecting food for the less fortunate.

As a former school board member, I am keenly aware of the challenges our schools face today. All of us in Congress agree that educating our youth should be one of this Nation's top priorities. A good solid education is the best tool to achieve success and ensure